Issue 44 September 2005

Leys News

Find out what came out of the GLOW project - writing, poetry, artwork and a sense of positivity. See some of this - pp 7-9

Don't forget to go to the Leys Fair! 10th September 12-5:30pm at BBL Park & Leisure Centre. Full details on p 6.

The Community Champions project has let us work with groups all over the Leys. See p4 for more.

Masthead and main picture - paintings done at the Warburg Crescent street party - see p 5

The FREE community newspaper for all of the Leys

About Leys News

Leys News Ltd is a not-for-profit business dedicated to providing news and information to the whole community.
Leys News is not affiliated to any political party.
Leys News operates an equal opportunities policy and encourages any resident to get involved in its work.

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. . . Editoral . . .

Welcome to Issue 44 of the Leys News! As the warm days of summer turn into the back-to-school chill of autumn, I hope that the stories here will inspire you. As well as personal stories, like the Leys Personality piece on Roy Simmonds (p3), there's a showcase of talent in the following pages. The GLOW project has been running for the last few months, and the poetry, creative writing and artwork which has come out of it is an amazing testament to people's talents. Check out pp 7-9 for some of this work, which focuses on the positive things happening here.

The theme of community spirit, which runs through so many of the projects here, is also evident in a range of other events which have taken place over the last two months. When a stabbing took place in Warburg Crescent, residents reacted by reclaiming their space by having a street party, getting all the residents back into the communal areas and creating a safe space (see p5 for more). Despite all the positive things happening on the Leys, violent crime continues to be a big concern in other parts of the estate though - our first SoapBox piece on page 10 looks at this in more detail.

Don't forget that it's easy to get involved with Leys News. As well as out involvement with projects like GLOW and Community Champions (see p 4), we are always looking for people to come on board. You don't have to be a brilliant writer - we are always on the look out for people with ideas and opinions, or to take photos, or introduce us to groups which are not normally featured. Get in touch with me on 711756 or email leysnews@hotmail.com.

Becky Telford

Residents 'have their say' on Housing Associations services

Residents of Ealing Family Housing Association, OCHA, Cherwell Housing Trust and Keystart Housing Association were given the opportunity to 'have their say' on all aspects of services from customer care to the speed and quality of repairs.

The informal afternoon event took place outside the Barn on Thursday 21st July. Officers from the four housing associations chatted to local residents and recorded their views on a range of services. For Ealing Family Housing Association these results are directly influencing the organisations long-term service plan and will help them set service standards for residents. Overall Ealing Family residents are satisfied with most of the services provided by Ealing Family Housing Association and the majority of those surveyed were 'very satisfied' with the ease in which they can contact staff.

However the condition of the estate is an area in which residents are most dissatisfied with. Drugs and graffiti are a particular concern as well as litter and rubbish. Ealing Family are now doing regular estate inspections and Ealing Family tenants are invited to join the housing officers in doing this. Ealing Family residents are asked to contact the Farmhouse on 712244 to find out what time and when these inspections take place.

Jennie Travis

Competition Corner

There are ten differences between the two pictures below - can you spot them all? If so, cirlce the differences and send it into us at Leys News, 26 Kingfisher Green, OX4 7BX. The winnerof the £10 prize will be chosen at random.

Congratulations to Mrs Hawker of Elder Way who won tickets to the Creation Theatre Company from Leys News Issue 43.

Thanks to Julian Dourado for the pictures in this spot-the-difference competition.

Don't forget to go to Leys Fair! As ever it's packed with music; world foods; alternative therapies; Wild Waste show; community stalls including Leys News; competitions; a funfair; sports zone and more...

Saturday 10th September 12-5:30
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Leys News No: 45

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Remebering Molly Florey

Sadly Molly Florey, local City Councillor and past Chair of Leys News, passed away in June 2005. She strived for better facilities in the area, campaigning for more youth provision and services for the disabled, including a new lift in the community centre. She knew a great many local people and issues having brought up her own family here. In the editorial articles she wrote for Leys News she expressed a great love for the area, caring deeply for its people. She will be sorely missed by many across the estate.

Leys News Roving Reporter Sasha East asked some local people how they remember Molly.

Brian Lester, Chairman of Blackbird Leys Parish Council where Molly began her political career many years ago, said, "She was instrumental in getting many things done across this estate she worked hard for young people and for disabled people. She will be missed not only by those she helped but many more as well".

Jim Saunders, Manager of Agnes Smith Advice Centre said "Molly was part of the management team but she wasn't just a member of the management - she was a close friend for everybody. She was a very much loved part of Agnes Smith Advice Centre and she will be missed by us all".

Phil Powell, Community Worker, added, "Molly's life was immersed in the life on the Leys. She lived it, breathed it and shared its griefs and joys. Her commitment to the estate was untiring. She saw the potential and good in everyone and was someone whose life will have a lasting impact on very many of us."

"If anyone personified the spirit of the Engaged Leys Resident, it was this woman, whose middle name was 'Commitment'. I came to know her in her twilight years, but knew her long enough to understand how great a loss her death was – and how great the blessings her life had brought. Rest now, Molly," said Chuma Nwokolo, Jr., the current Chair of Leys News.

Leys Personality - Roy Simmonds

Roy Simmonds is a familiar friendly face on the Leys estate, where he has lived for more than 30 years. "When I was first married, the Council allocated us a house up here. It was quite different in those days - no hassle - we always left the front door open." In the early 1970s, when Roy had young children, he got involved with the Blackbirds football team for young people as a coach and a referee. "At one point, I had one son playing for the Blackbirds and one playing with the team at Northway - Saturdays were always a bit hectic!"

Roy worked on the buses in Oxford for 31 years, until 1997 when he was made redundant. "I've always enjoyed working with people. When I was on the buses I used to go a bit further to help people getting on and off - sometimes even with their Christmas trees! Since I was made redundant I have been taking things on to keep busy."

In keeping busy, Roy has been involved with a range of courses, building up his skills in IT, including Photoshop. It was on a course that he met his wife Janet - also a popular local figure - in 1998. "Janet encouraged me to go on a course with her to learn facilitation skills. I thought there would be plenty of other blokes there but it was only me!" However, the couple is probably best known for their work in running the Thursday Lunch Club (see article below) Roy is also on the Board of Leys News .

"The Leys is a good place to live - it's always a tiny minority who throws it out for the rest of us. I started working with the community when I moved up here and I haven't stopped - I just like to make things happen."

People like Roy and Janet are what makes the Leys such a special place to live. Thank you for getting involved and inspiring others to do the same.

The Thursday Lunch Club

The Thursday Lunch Club has gone through many changes to arrive at the position that it is in today.

After the death of Mr Sinnott, the position of Chairman was taken on by Mr Simmonds. Things changed in 2003, when the Shaw Trust (a charitable organisation supporting the Lunch Club) failed to secure funding. This was a big blow, especially when they took all the Lunch Club equipment from The Barn (which was their right) leaving us with just the cooker.

Things looked very bleak and it looked like this would be the end of the Club. However, thanks to various companies and funding the kitchen was restocked. The matter of a chef was another concern - a person was found and given a month's trial but unfortunately this didn't work out.

As the club is run by volunteers, one of the members agreed to continue with the cooking. To date this has worked out well. The members pay for their meals, and this money is used to buy the food. Everyone receives a two-course meal and so far we have had no complaints! Some of the members volunteer to wait on the tables, ensuring that everyone gets a hot meal.

Each week there is a raffle, with prizes bought out of the club funds, and for those who wish to stay behind there is bingo. Any profits from the money collected are ploughed back into the Club. Each year we also have a Christmas lunch, a raffle and an entertainer, and last year everyone received a small present. This happens thanks to funding.

Two or three coach trips are run during the year, usually two to the coast and one to a market at Christmas time. So far we have been on one trip to Poole and another two are planned; one to Eastbourne and one to Merry Hill Market.

The members of the committee, elected each year by the members, are all volunteers. As far as possible the committee carries out members' wishes. The Club would like to say a big thank you to all the organisations that have given us grants and enabled us to keep running.

Lunch is not provided on a drop-in basis, but if you want more information about joining the Club, pop into The Barn between 11-12 on a Thursday.

This article was written by a member of the Thursday Lunch Club as part of the Community Champions Project - see page 4 for more details.

Community Champions - finding out about your area

Do you want to be a community champion?

Over the last few months, Leys News has been running a project funded by Community Champions to work with community groups and organisations on the Leys. During sessions, we talked about journalism skills and the media, and helped people put together articles and photos for the paper. One of the aims of the project was to work with groups who aren't well-represented in Leys News. The July edition featured an article about Longlands Residential Care Home and Windale School - on this page are stories from refugees and asylum seekers who are learning English at the CFE on Cuddesdon Way; and pupils from St John Fisher school. We have also worked with young people at the CDI Summer Project; the Thursday Lunch Club (see p3) and with a range of people through the UK Dads Posse network.

It is hoped that people involved with the project will continue to work with Leys News after this initial work.

Community Champions is an initiative of the Department for Skills and Education, and gives grants for projects. The grant fund was set up to help people who can inspire others to get more involved in renewing their neighbourhoods through participation in community groups. Leys News is delighted to have received this grant. Find out more at about Community Champions at www.dfes.gov.uk/communitychampions.

Even though this project has now finished, Leys News is committed to working with local people all the time. If you, or a group you work with would like to be involved with the paper, get in touch with Becky at Leys News by phoning 711756, or email leysnews@hotmail.com.

As part of the Community Champions project, we worked with the English as a Second Language (ESOL) Summer School at the CFE on the Leys. We worked with two groups of students to talk about the media in the UK, their opinions about Oxford and their homelands. Whilst some of the students were here from Europe to improve their English, the majority of the students were refugees or asylum seekers. The students interviewed each other - some of their answers are presented below, along with a photo of the students at the Leys News office.

Pieorine - Congo
I left Congo in 1997 and went first to France. I came to the UK because I need to improve my English to help with my job in transport. I have one child, a beautiful little girl.

Nawal - Sudan
Sudan is a big country and lots of different kinds of people live there. There is a war there. I like Britain because people are helpful but the roads are crowded.

Mahmood - Afghanistan
Afghanistan has a population of 30 million people, and we grow sugar, wheat and corn. I like Oxford city centre and the parks.

Mohammed - Kashmir
My home, Kashmir, is very dangerous; but it is beautiful, with many mountains.

Jirawan - Thailand
I am from Bangkok which is very warm and full of friendly people. Bangkok has many shopping places and it is close to the sea. I like Oxford because it is interesting and the people are nice. I want to study British history in the future.

Musa - Iraq (Kurdistan)
I have lived in England for three years. My parents and brothers and sister still live in Kurdistan. I like to play football and go to the cinema.

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Over a number of weeks, we also worked with a group of pupils at St John Fisher School...

Young Fishers Investigate

By Rowan Willet, Harry Smith, Katheryn Sperko and Jade McGinnity

We thought we should find out what St. John Fisher School looked like many years ago. We started by interviewing old students, including our bigger brothers, sisters and parents. Most of them said how small the school looks now. Some mentioned the many new things added to improve the school. They all had favourite memories, like music lessons, Christmas assemblies, and playtimes - and they all had their favourite teachers too. Says Caroline Sperko, "I was 5 years old when I started at St John Fisher in 1991. After I finished, I came back to do my work experience there with the Year Ones, which I really enjoyed. I've been back a couple of times for different events, and have been to every sports day since I was 16."

We also interviewed a secretary and a member, Jennifer and Negar, of the students' School Council about their future plans for St. John Fisher. They had many interesting ideas, such as a new lunch menu, healthy snacks, and salad bars. There was also talk of exercise equipment, and fund-raising activities such as cake-sales. We asked Negar about our chances of getting our very own swimming pool after a good fund-raising event. "Zero in one hundred!" she laughed.

Photos:
Top; Members of the School Council, Negar Gohari and Jennifer Fay, being interviewed by Katheryn Sperko and Jade McGinnity.

Bottom; Students of John Fisher RC Primary School, Rowan Willet, Harry Smith, Katheryn Sperko and Jade McGinnity.

Reclaiming Warburg Crescent

The beautiful weather on 25th June saw a street party in Warburg Crescent. Following the stabbing of a young man in Warburg Crescent in May, the community wanted to come together and have a positive response to this disturbing event. Ines Kretzschmar, one of the organisers, said, "After the stabbing people were shocked and disbelieving. People were worried about safety in the area, particularly those with children. The people who had come out of their homes to help the victim at the time also needed support. We wanted to reclaim where we live."

Supported by GLOW, the local churches and Housing Consortium, the Leisure Centre, the three local Councils and the Street Wardens - along with many local residents - the event was a huge success. "The media reaction in the aftermath of the stabbing meant that we felt people had a very negative view of our area, and this reflected badly on the people living there," said Ines. As well as providing food, children's activities and GLOW sessions, there was a BLAG workshop giving a chance for everyone to get involved in producing beautiful artworks. These have since been put up in Warburg Crescent so that all the residents can see them.

Ines notes that the event has been much more than a lovely day out. "It brought the street closer together. People are still talking about it and would like to repeat a street party in the next summer. But I am sure we will have a few more get togethers on a smaller scale in this street before then. All the people behaved immaculately and had great fun.

"Yes, there is lots of community spirit on the Leys. Let's always remember our Warburg Crescent Street Party. Let's have more of it. Some of the older residents mentioned on the day that they had this kind of party during and shortly after the war. But really we should not wait for bad things or times to happen.

"People are always in need of positivity, fun and joy. If people have opportunities to do nice things together where they live they will make that place a better living place, own it and therefore care more about it and their neighbours. They will also come closer together and they will be able to create a truly positive community spirit, where crime, anti-social behaviour and vandalism perhaps has less and less a chance. Blackbird Leys can be a very beautiful place. It is worth investing in it."

Pictures: Top - one of the signs encouraging people to enjoy the day.
Below - some of the paintings done as part of the day's art workshops.

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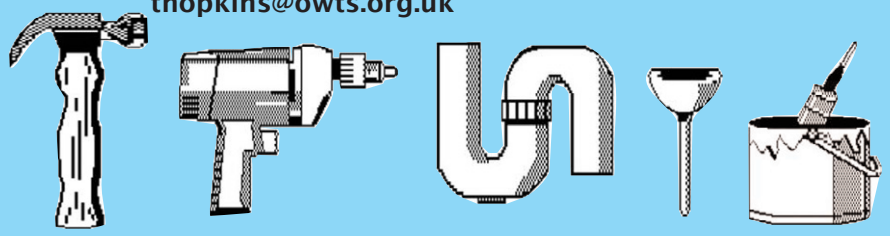

For detailed information contact 01865 741317

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Quality-Assured Childminders on the Leys

Congratulations to registered childminders Ruth Brown and Sarah Shayler, attending the Leys Kiddies Club who have achieved Quality-Assured Status. The childcare provided by these childminders had been carefully assessed before they were recruited onto the TRIO 'Children Come First' Childminding Network in Oxfordshire. Network childminders are regularly visited by a co-ordinator to ensure they are working to the NCMA Quality Childminding Charter - and so provide excellent care for the children they look after, above and beyond those laid down by statutory regulations.

If you would like more information about becoming a Quality-Assured childminder please call me, Rosemary Green or Trio's Head Office on 0845 6031048 or come along to meet a Network Co-ordinator at the Leys Kiddies Club which will be re-opening after the summer break.

Parents/Carers and children are welcome to drop-in during term times on Mondays 9.30 am -2pm for fun, play and a chat over a cup of tea!

Text and picture by Rosemary Green

Photo below - the childminders with their certificates and some of the children at Trio

Leys Fair 2005
Healthy Living Theme
is coming!

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Alternative Therapies
World & Healthy Foods
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Hebborn's Funfair
Wild Waste Show
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Competitions

Blackbird Leys Park & Leisure Centre

12-5.30pm Saturday 10 September

HEALTHY LIVING INITIATIVE

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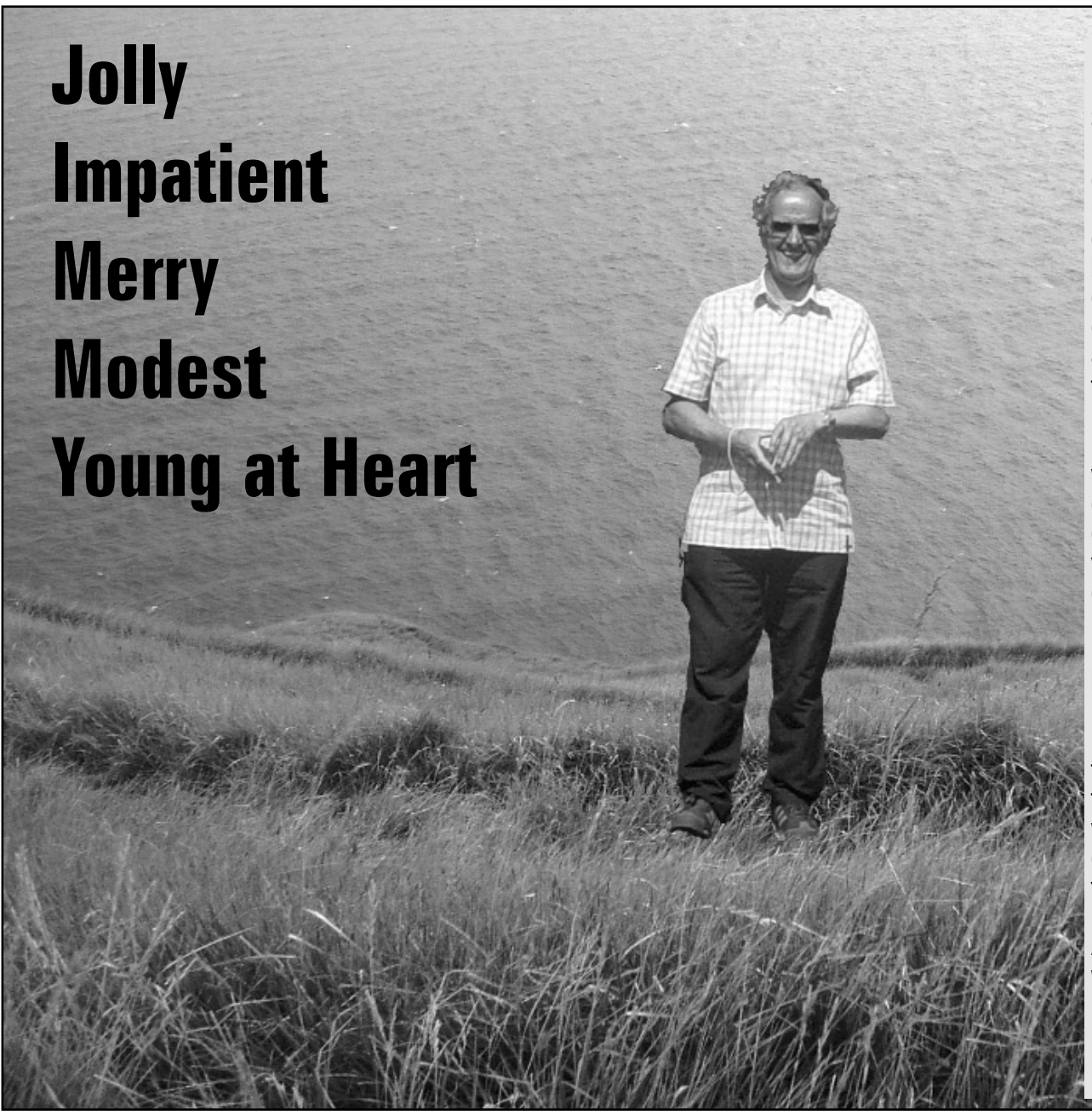
Further information from Natalie Huckin, Leys Fair co-ordinator, on 07766 560620

What makes us GLOW?



How I got involved with GLOW

Some weeks ago in May I had a phone call from Nikki Marriott asking me if I would like to come to a creative writing workshop at the Blackbird Leys Community Centre. I didn't know what to say as I didn't know what it would entail. I was certainly bemused! Eventually I said yes, and came along. I enjoyed myself and was glad I came. It was very creative and educational, and I met a lot of people and made friends. At the end, Jim Barlow told us there would be follow up.

During June and July I took part in the follow up with GLOW. I am learning how to use a digital camera, how to take photos and download them onto a computer. I am very interested in this and it's very exciting. During these weeks I learned how to enhance and work on these photos using Photoshop. I am so glad I came to all these workshops because I have learned so much. It has enriched my life and been great fun.

I would say to anybody who might be thinking about taking up a new hobby, or a new level of education that you have a go. You will be surprised at how well you can adapt to modern technology. At the end of the day you will look back and feel glad you took part.

A big thank you to all the pupils and tutors who were involved.

Poem, introuction to GLOW and picture by Jimmy Hayes. Jimmy created the photo in Photoshop during the GLOW workshops.

What's Really Good?

Sleep is purple.
Life is my dad.
Belgium bun is the taste
Of pleasure.
Food is good.
Friends are like the
Caribbean.
Children are velvet.
Grandchildren are cotton
wool

Carmel Ryan

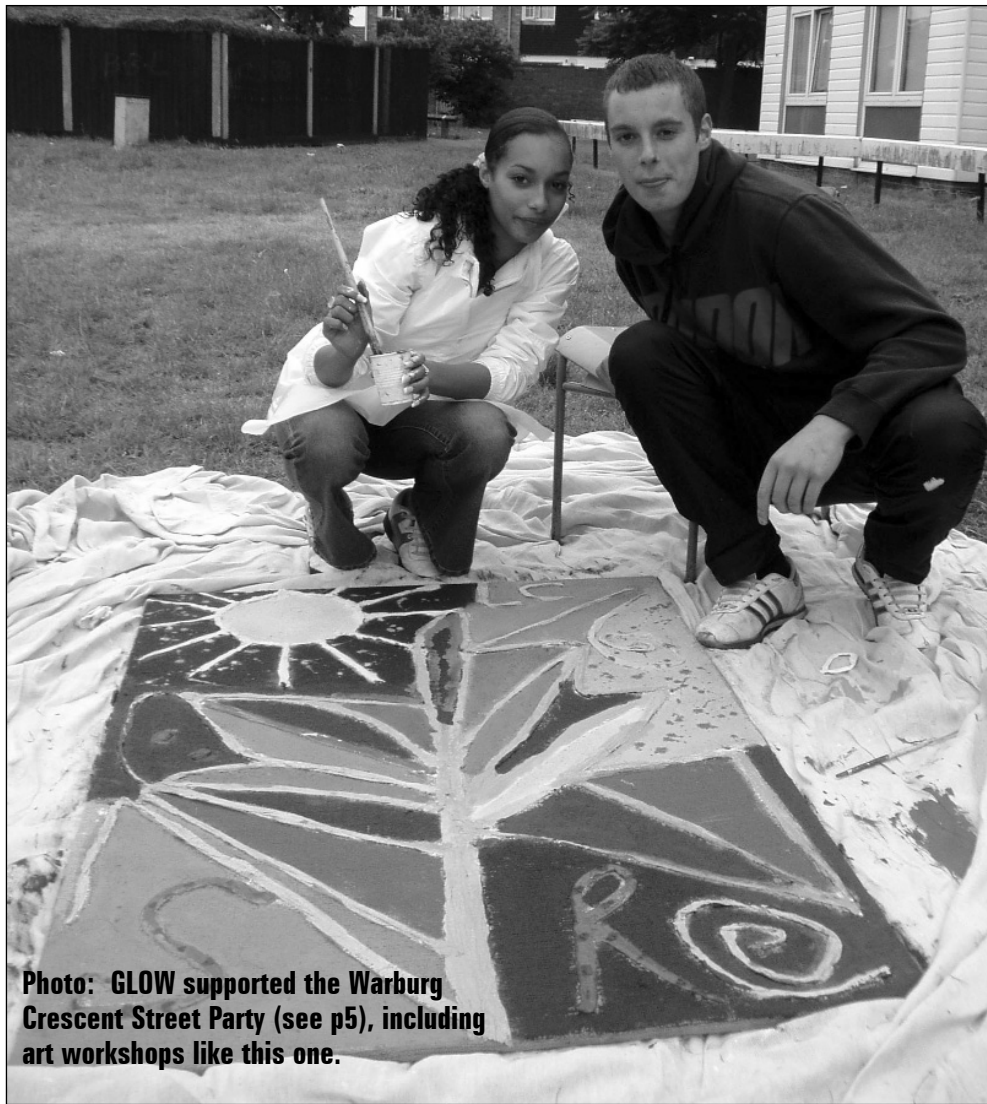


Photo: GLOW supported the Warburg Crescent Street Party (see p5), including art workshops like this one.

What makes us GLOW?

These pieces were created as part of the Glow workshops in creative writing, art and poetry, which were held between May-August 2005. GLOW is a project on the Leys about expressing positivity in a creative way. So many brilliant things came out of the project that we are only able to show a selection here. Watch out for more about GLOW in the October edition of Leys News.

Where there is no name at the end of a piece, they are here anonymously. Thanks to all the participants and tutors, and special thanks to Tanya Prescott for her involvement with the design and layout of these pages.

If I were...

If I was a flower ...
I'd be lilac - fresh green leaves with each
New spring
Heavily scented sprays of every shade of purple

If I was a colour ...
I'd be blue like sky over sea on a
Summer's day

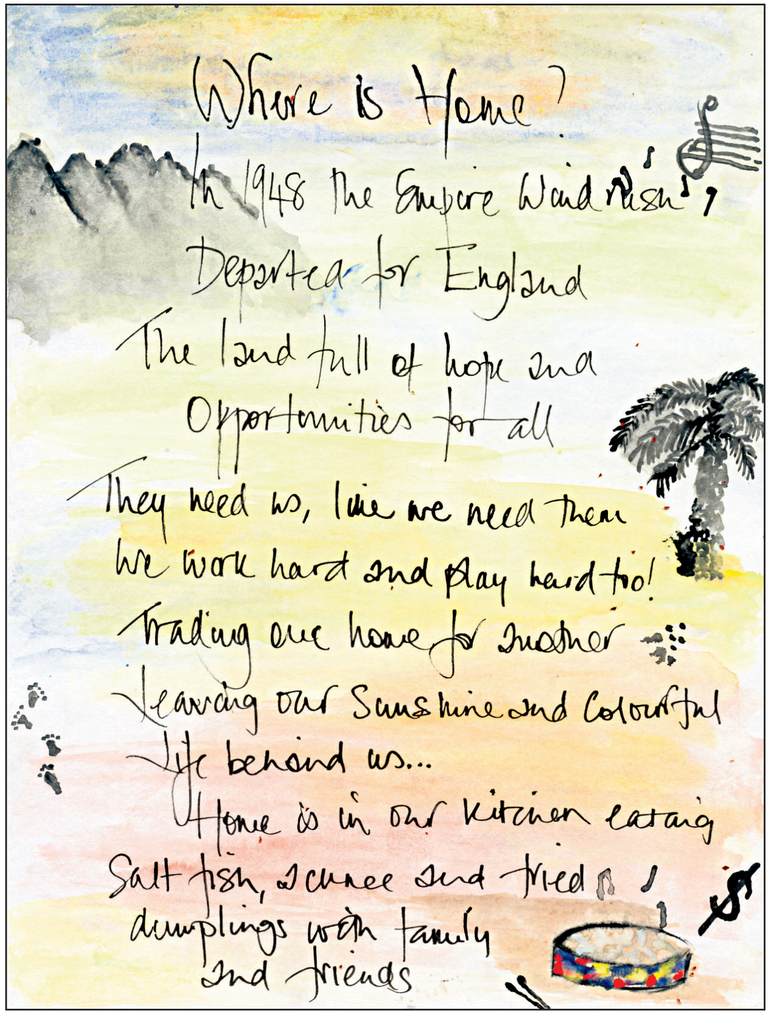
If I was something in the sky ...
I'd be a cloud moving across the earth,
Wispy light or dark and shedding rain,
Blown and shaped by the wind

If I was a building ...
I'd be a summerhouse full of fun and
Chat and cups of tea whatever the weather

If I was a musical instrument ...
I'd be a piano, soft and loud, black
And white, capable of infinite expression

If I was a sound ...
I'd be rain on a tent in the earliest hours
Of morning

If I was a sports woman ...
I'd row and swim down rivers and across
Seas.



This hand...

This hand is slender and light,

Strokes, provokes and ignites.

This hand has made various stands

Keeps faith and develops my brand.

This hand holds time with rhythm and

rhyme

Has turned pages that develop my mind.

This hand has stayed by my side

And has always been part of my guide.

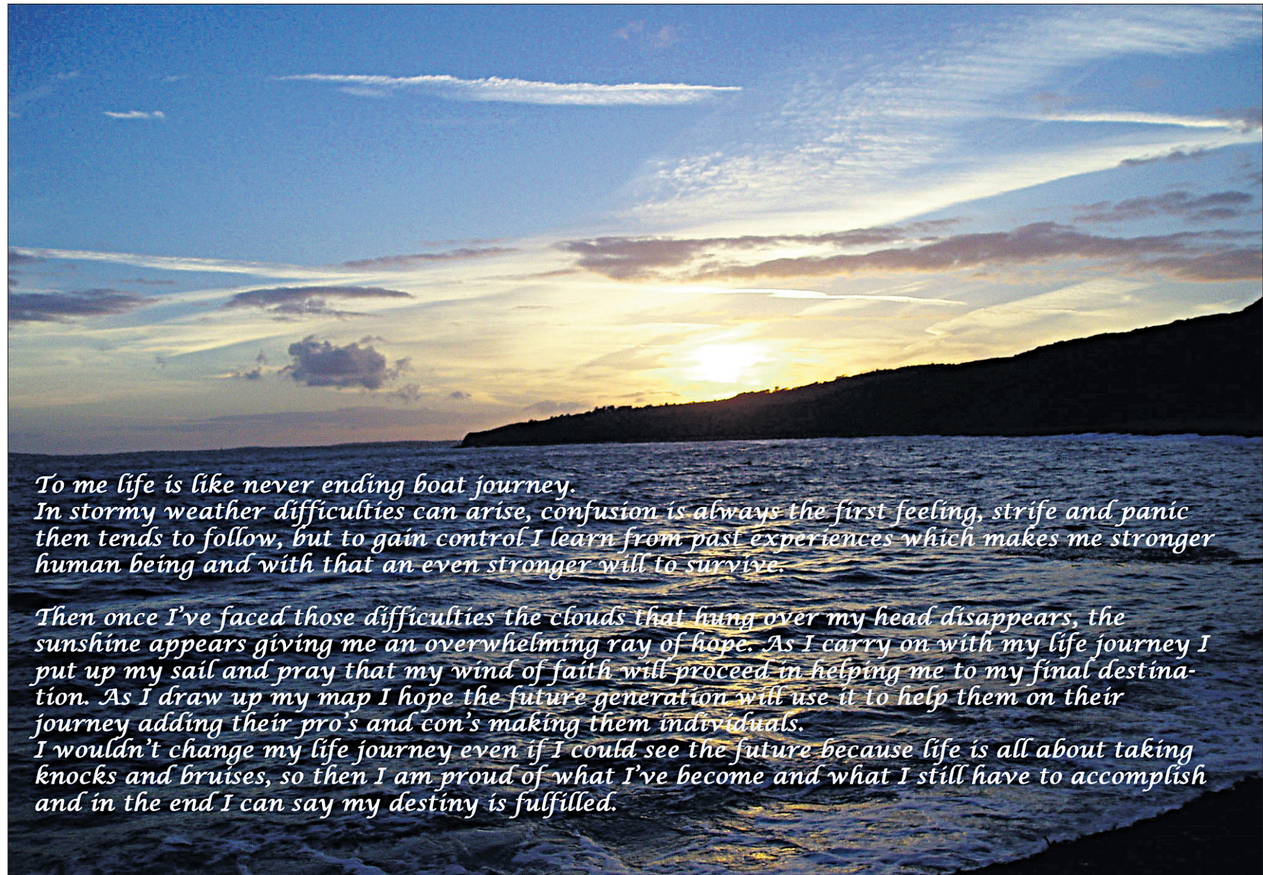
Photo: people taking part in the GLOW singing workshop

Going Away - What Will It Be Like?

Just finish my exams, life starts now. Decided to take a month out of England. Wanted to go before but couldn't, had to study first then could go after. Never been on a plane before. How do I feel? Nervous, scared, anxious but happy and looking forward to it. Packed my bags got my money passport swim wear. First time away from mum, gone with my auntie and my little cousin.

Met my mum's family in the capital of Jamaica and then went to visit my dad's family. Two different areas of this country I visited. Such a wonderful experience. Nice to see how the other side of the world live. The air smells good. The food the people the environment was good to witness. Had a lot of time to think. Also got a chance to listen to my parents'-parents' talk to me about when they were young.

Karen Clarke-Wilson



To me life is like never ending boat journey.
In stormy weather difficulties can arise, confusion is always the first feeling, strife and panic then tends to follow, but to gain control I learn from past experiences which makes me stronger human being and with that an even stronger will to survive.

Then once I've faced those difficulties the clouds that hung over my head disappears, the sunshine appears giving me an overwhelming ray of hope. As I carry on with my life journey I put up my sail and pray that my wind of faith will proceed in helping me to my final destination. As I draw up my map I hope the future generation will use it to help them on their journey adding their pro's and con's making them individuals.
I wouldn't change my life journey even if I could see the future because life is all about taking knocks and bruises, so then I am proud of what I've become and what I still have to accomplish and in the end I can say my destiny is fulfilled.

Music success

Between September 2004 and July 2005, the Leys Music Recording Studio (LMRS) taught a BTEC Intermediate Certificate in Sound Engineering and Music Technology. The course, which was funded by Oxford Inspires and Aim Higher, was completed by eleven students. Ten have taken the exams and all passed - the remaining student was unfortunately involved in an accident but will take the exams when he is recovered, hopefully cementing the 100% pass rate.

David Norland who runs LMRS and was a tutor on the course said, "We had an excellent group, they were really keen. I'm delighted that they all passed because this is the first time we have run the course. Even though they've finished, the students still drop by the studio and keep working at their music."

One of the students, Ade Adaniran, said he almost went to Manchester to take a similar course. "I ended up moving back to the Leys and found out that this was being offered - I went straight down to the studio to get signed up. Everyone who was on this course got on and we all interacted well together - we're making plans to work together in the future.

"The one thing about this course was that all the information you're given is useful even if it isn't clear at the time - the tutors taught much more than just the course. Initially it was difficult getting used to all the technical terms but you soon understand it. It's like walking into the studio for the first time and seeing the mixing desk and all the equipment and wondering if you'll understand it all. But if you keep thinking about what you've been taught, you pick it up really quickly.

"I'm working hard on my production, with some projects on the go. I would like to be a producer, and work with young people; setting an example and helping them express themselves through music. I know LMRS are trying to do an advanced course in 2006 and I'm waiting for that. Until then I'll spend this year perfecting what I know."

LMRS is hoping to run the BTEC Intermediate again in October 2005. Application forms are available from the studio and Leys Linx.

BTEC INTERMEDIATE CERTIFICATE

In Sound Engineering & Music Technology

Course run at Blackbird Leys Community Centre

Application forms available now

Contact the studio on 401585 or Leys Linx

Ethnic Minority Business Service

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OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

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The EMBS is an equal opportunities training organisation. Our courses are open to everybody regardless of race, creed, colour, disability, gender or age.

Loans!

Does it make sense?

Borrowing £500 from the "provi" for one year would cost you about £300.

If you save with the Credit Union and borrow from us, it will cost you £33.

If you're a regular borrower with the "provi", you could be throwing away hundreds of pounds every year!

Blackbird Leys Credit Union

At Leys Linx, Blackbird Leys Community Centre

We're here on weekdays (except Friday) and on Saturday mornings. Come and see us - it's a great way to save on the cost of borrowing.

Blackbird Leys Credit Union
for Savings, Cheques Cashed, Loans
Leys Linx Centre, Blackbird Leys Community Centre, 718503

Soapbox

Got something you want to say? Spit it out!

Hey you!
With your knife in your pocket.
Hey you!
With your tool in your hand.
Think you're cool? Think you're tough?
A real man, a hard girl?

Shame on you!
You know nothing
And understand even less.
You have not even begun to see.
Think you're cool? Think you're tough?
You don't even know
The price of blood
Or how slender the thread
By which all things hang.
Death is only ever
Three fast minutes away.
A millimetre to the left
An inch higher, an inch lower.
To die is so easy
To live is the test.

Shame on you!
With your attitude.
You wanna be gangsta.
Your tough talk,
Your hate filled spitting,
Dissing mothers and sons
And daughters.
You know nothing!
By your ugly words
You invite demons
Into the world, into your soul.
You think you're clever?
You don't even know
What you are throwing away.
You can't hear
The weeping of the angels.

How does what you do
Make this world a better place?
How does what you do
Change anything?
Shame on you.
You think you are a rebel
Standing against the system?
Listen!
The system has you
Right exactly where it wants you:
Poor.
Ignorant.
Killing one another.
Hey, same place you've been
For ten thousand years.
No change there then.
Babylon owns you
Body, mind and soul
Has fed you with its lies
And you have believed it
And swallowed it whole.
You deal in its dollars:
Money, violence
And loveless sex.
Shame on you!
And shame on you too!
You know who you are,
Big people who should know better
Allowing it,
Tolerating it,
Celebrating violence and slackness.
You use and carry knives?
You smoke and sell your
Poisoned weed,
Twisted against nature?
Your boyfriend, your husband,
Is selling crack?
Turning your sons into gangstas
Your daughters into whores,
Spreading disease?
Hey girls!
Why do you choose the bad man
Instead of the good?
By your own hands you smother
The seed of hope
Your children!

And shame on all of us
For allowing this
To happen in our midst;
For not standing together
As a community
And saying enough is enough.
We choose life!
We choose hope!
We choose beauty!
We choose peace!

So help us God.

Anonymous

The soapbox column is for any resident of the Leys to express their thought and opinions, and is not necessarily the opinion of Leys News. The idea is to be thought-provoking and open up debates, or to get something off your chest. If you want to respond to the piece above, but don't want to write this kind of article, don't forget that you can write a 'letter to the Editor' which may be published in the next edition. Whilst we can publish your piece anonymously, please include your name and contact details in case we need to get in touch.

If you want to contribute something to this column, on any theme, the following guidelines apply: It must be relevant to the people who live on the estate, but it can be on a local, national or international theme; It must be within the obvious boundaries of good taste, decency and journalistic standards- nothing which is racist, sexist, homophobic or prejudiced against any other group, will be considered, nor will anything which contravenes libel or copyright law.

Blackbird Bonanza

Did you know The Blackbird Bonanza gives out 8 cash prizes every week from £100 to £10?

Recent winners have come from Evenlode Tower, Sandy Lane, Acacia Ave and Sparrow Way.

Are you a member? Are you missing out on the chance to win, while supporting a local charity?

Visit us at our stall at Leys Fair, sign up to be a member on Saturday 10th Sept and receive an extra bonus ticket for the following 4 weeks.

For more details please contact the co-ordinator on Ox: 423023 or call into Pathway Workshop.

If you are a member, thank you for your continued support, it is greatly appreciated. Please remember if you are going on holiday you can always prepay and receive a bonus ticket if you pay for 3 weeks or more. Please see your collector for further details.

Pathway Workshop,
Dunnock Way, Blackbird Leys, Oxford OX4 7EX - next to the Spar shop.

Blackbird Leys Public Art Project

Plans are underway for a new participatory public art commission to enhance the exterior of the community centre and reflect life on the Leys. The project will offer training opportunities for local artists as well as opportunities for local people to contribute to the work. A brief for the lead artist is being developed and will be available early September.

We will be looking for an artist who works in metal and has experience of working with communities. We will be particularly interested in artists that have good knowledge and sound understanding of the Leys area. This project is a part of the Evolving City programme, coordinated by Oxford Inspires and project managed by Fusion - Oxford's Community Art Agency.

Contact Fusion for further information on 01865 245735 or email Tara@fusion-arts.org

Community Action Development - previously 'Communities Against Drugs'

It was started in 2002 by just a couple of paid staff. Now three years on, we have 15 unpaid staff, all volunteering to empower the COMMUNITY by disseminating correct information around drugs, alcohol and related issues. As volunteers we will promote positive ACTION around life choices, healthy lifestyles and general well-being. In doing so, we are supporting and encouraging the DEVELOPMENT of an individual's life skills and experiences, to enable them to reach their full potential. The project offers a drop-in for informal and confidential information on drugs and alcohol, and offers a range of services and learning opportunities.

C.A.D will be arranging a meeting with Blackbird Leys residents and all those affected by drug use. For more information call 01865 402919 or contact Gavin direct on 07940 292590 at any time. **Gavin Brackett**

Dovecote Afterschool Club

New Term - starts September 12th

50p per session per child

Come along and have lots of fun and make new friends

Telephone Carol on Oxford 712299 for further information

Green Fingers

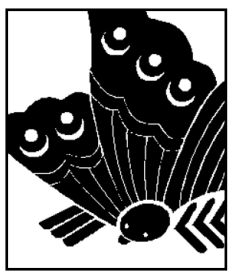
By Stuart Mabbutt

Image courtesy of barrysclipart.com

Wow! What a response I have had from my series of companion planting articles. It really does seem to have struck a chord with many readers, and is certainly a popular area of interest.

This is the final in the series, but we will almost certainly revisit the subject in the future.

So, what should we cover this time? Well, it is known that some plants compete with, or can directly harm other plants and therefore aid weed control. This is certainly true in the fight against clover, where it has been shown that oil from the roots of buttercups can inhibit the growth of clover.



Tall plants are good at competing with some unwanted weeds as they shade them out.

At the other extreme, tiny plants like 'tagetes minuta', if grown well, can help smother the vigorous growth of bindweed.

Some plants also actively improve the soil, especially those considered to be humus/texture improvers and mineral builders.

Valerian planted in small groups is a valuable way of encouraging worms, which in turn help break down heavy soils.

The legume family is well known to help release nitrogen into the soil, which is ideal for cabbages etc. Legumes include beans, peas, sweet peas and even laburnum trees. They excrete nitrogen from their roots that benefit surrounding plants or those that are planted afterwards.

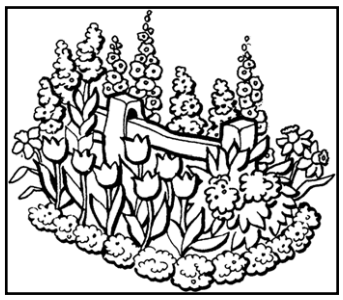


Image courtesy of www.abcteach.com

Iron deficiencies are a common problem in many gardeners' soils, and cause a type of plant anaemia. Iron can be gained by growing and digging in comfrey, groundsel or foxgloves.

Phosphorus, which plants need for setting down roots can be incorporated by digging in well rotted oak tree leaves or maybe even comfrey.

Potassium that is required for fruiting plants like apples and tomatoes, can be increased in the soil by mixing apple and maple tree leaves into your compost heap. Dig it in at a later date.

Well, there you have it. In the last few articles, I have given a good basic overview of companion planting/gardening. More could be said and written, and I will do if readers have areas they would like me to cover.

In essence, companion gardening is about encouraging a wide and varied range of plants and inhabitants. From insects to plants, habitats to materials. In addition, a healthy soil structure is essential, which has a regular dose of compost mixed in that contains as many traces of all the materials in a varied and healthy garden as is possible.

Good Gardening.
STUART MABBUTT

Page Sponsored by OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

The Leys University

The Leys University Debuts

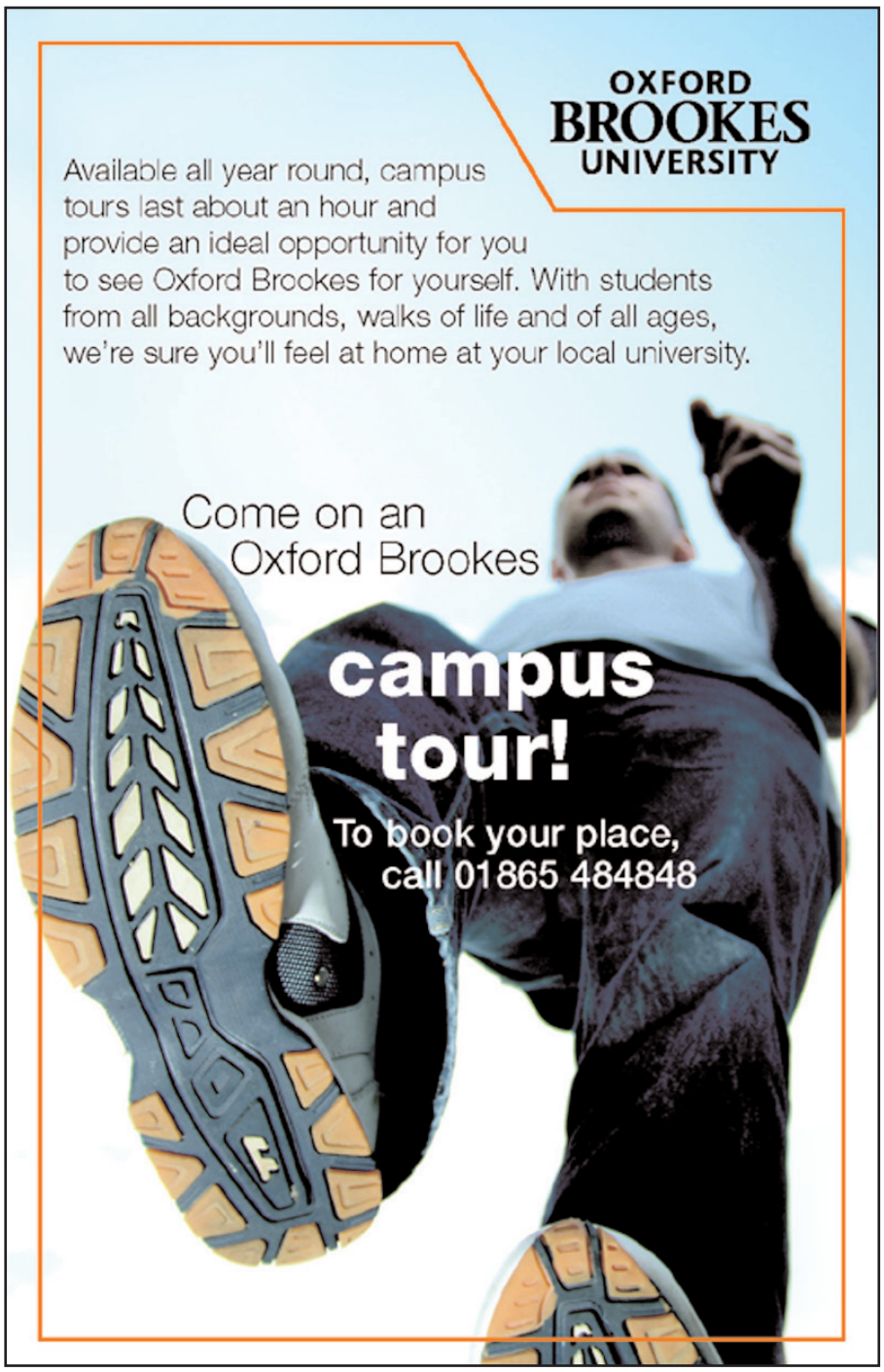
The summer of 2005 was one with a difference in the Leys because it saw the inauguration of the Summer University, launched by Oxford Brookes University and the Oxfordshire County Council on 8th August.

The project was designed to give interested residents of the Leys a taster of the university experience. Three courses in digital video pictures, jazz dance and poetry were run by Oxford Brookes tutors at the Community Centre and the Leisure Centre between the 8th and the 12th of August, 2005. The courses were well received and seventeen successful students were awarded attendance certificates at a ceremony at Oxford Brookes' Harcourt Hill campus on 12th August. The presentation of certificates was preceded by poetry and dance performances by the attendees, as well as the screening of their video projects.

Patsy Spencer, who recently finished a Masters course at Brookes, also attended the poetry course and said, "It was a great opportunity to sit down and compose my thoughts. The themes we were given to write on were quite interesting, and it was exciting to see how the other students treated each particular theme."

Angie Phillip, Director of Continuing Education at the University expressed her delight at the success of the programme and spoke of her plans for a follow-up programme. "Attendees of the Summer University will be encouraged to move on to degree programmes, with the possibility of getting credits for their hard work during the summer."

Julia Poudy, graduate of the Digital Video Course, proudly displays her Oxford Brookes certificate.



BLAG on the Streets

As the summer holidays stretched out before us with the promise of (hopefully) long hot days and laughing children, BLAG closed the doors of the community art room until the State 'steals' our children again in September.

One of the aims of BLAG is to get the community being creative, so, after our successful "painting in the parks" last summer, we were out and about in local parks with a brand new project for kids of all ages. Many thanks to the CDI Summer Youth Project for their continuing to support and fund us in this summer project. This year we dragged bundles of willow and much tissue paper and glitter into local parks during August.

Everyone was welcome to make fantastic mobile flying creatures and sculptures to take home, limited on by your imagination. And it was free!

Does anybody else get the urge to paint or make something "if only they had the time"?

BLAG is about meeting other local creative people, enriching that part of us and supporting each other to make time. You don't have to be "artistic", you may just want a quiet place to try something new. We're friendly and can make a good cup of tea. So how about coming and joining us? We will be back in the art room, at the back of Blackbird Leys Community Centre on Thursdays, 9.30-11.30 am and Mondays 6-8pm, from September, during term times. We look forward to welcoming you.

Karen Godwin, BLAG

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THE LEYS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE SUMMER PROJECT 2005

This summer, the CDI summer project has reached...

More young people:....over 150 young people came to the project

More venues:...the Youth Centre, Jubilee Community Centre, The Barn Youth Centre, the music studio, Local parks, Falcon Close, the Leisure centre.

More activities:...kids café, street dance, DJ workshops, football, basketball, drumming, arts, fashion design, MTV video making, table tennis, t-shirt design, ice skating, swimming, IT hub....etc

Some comments from young people who attended the project:
"...the activities are exciting."
"...wicked!"
"...the workers are nice."
"...there are more things to do and I made new friends."

Look out in the Leys Linx Centre and Leys News for details of activities coming up at half term and Christmas!

THE LEYS CDI

THE LEYS COMMUNITY CHEST: LOCAL GRANTS FOR LOCAL GROUPS

You can apply to the Chest for grants for:

- Training
- Research and visiting other projects
- Start-up costs
- Equipment
- Volunteer expenses
- Local events and one-off projects

Next round of applications need to reach us by: Friday 14th October 2005

Application forms can be obtained from: The Leys CDI, The Dovecote, Nightingale Avenue, Greater Leys, Oxford.

The Leys Community Chest is funded by the Oxfordshire Community Foundation

The Leys Community Development Initiative is a registered charity (1049534)

Your Councillors

Parish Council

Your Councillors are: Chairman, Brian Lester; Vice Chair, Bob Avery: Treasurer, Sharon Cole

Non position holders are: Ron Harris Chris Hatton, Rae Humberstone, Cyril Martin Chris Pill and Gordon Roper. For further details please contact the Parish Council office on 01865 734346 office hours 8.00am-6.00pm Monday to Friday, or leave a message.

Oxford City Council

Name	Party	Ward	Address	Tel	Email	Surgery
Cllr Lee Cole	Independent Working Class Association	Blackbird Leys Ward	31 Long Ground, GL, OX4 7WS	07771 996945	lee.cole47@ntlworld.com	Every Thursday from 7.30-8.30 at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre
Cllr Rae Humberstone	Labour	Blackbird Leys Ward	75 Little Bury, GL, OX4 7UZ	01865 779678	raehumberstone@btinternet.com	
Cllr Stuart Craft	Independent Working Class Association	Northfield Brook	4 Cranesbill Way, BBL, OX4 7WP	01865 427667	stuart.craft1@ntlworld.com	Every Wednesday from 6.30-8.30 at the Clockhouse, Greater Leys

Oxford County Council

Name	Party	Ward	Address	Tel	Email
Val Smith	Labour	Leys & Lye Ward	4 Flaxfield Road BBL, OX4 6QD	01865 396073	val.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Barbara Gatehouse	Labour	Leys & Lye Ward	33 Salford Road Old Marston, OX3 0RY	(01865) 240424	barbara.gatehouse@oxfordshire.gov.uk

. . . church news . . .

The Church of the Holy Family

The Church of the Holy family is celebrating its 40th anniversary of the completion of the Church building. Lots of activities reminiscing how Blackbird Leys Estate has matured with the Church have been going on. A photographic exhibition at the Leys Linx showed the early days of the Church and the Estate. The display is now at the Church.

Many many memories have been stirred. Memories of Baptisms, christenings weddings and funerals have come back. Many have been surprised that the Church has been at the heart of the community's development. The Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground (BLAP), the Agnes Smith Advice Centre, and the Credit Union are examples of some of what has come from the Church. Holy Family Church still supports two community workers and youth workers. There was a major celebratory service on the 1st of May where many past and present members and ministers attended.

Water come to me eyes

The most interesting event so far has been the African Caribbean social evening in May. It was full of ackee and salt fish, dumplins, and tens of other tasty Caribbean dishes washed down by various punches and drinks. And who could have known that some of our ladies and gents could swing like that to the Calypso and reggae melodies of yesteryears? DJ Andrew put up the Cross as a young man.

Other upcoming events include a 60s-90s Fashion Show (22nd October). Do you have any fashions from those days? Talk to Sasha or Lex.

Holy Family Church in the 1960s

The Leys Community Church

The Leys Community Church is a lively family church. We believe people are important and that Jesus can make a real difference to our daily lives. Our Sunday afternoon services, which include special activities for children, are held in the upstairs bar at the Leisure Centre on Pegasus Road and start at 3.30pm. Services are informal and relaxed, with lively music and practical talks from the Bible. We seek to include everyone in the life of the church.

If you'd like to come along please feel free. If you would like to come but need help with transport or would just like some more information then please phone Richard and Kate on (01865) 714153.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Serving Blackbird Leys, Greater Leys, Garsington & Cuddesdon.

Priest-in-charge: Fr. David Hartley, Tel 01865 779658.

Sunday Mass	9.30am and 6.00pm
Weekday Mass	Monday 9.00am
	Tuesday 7.30pm
	Thursday 7.00pm
	Friday 9.00am
	Saturday 10.30am
Confessions	Saturday 10.30am

. . . what's on weekly . . .

Age Resource Desk
The Clockhouse.
Mon to Fri, 10am - 1pm
Computer access for the over 50's. Info: 717614

The Barn Youth Club
Wednesday, 7-9pm

The Barn Youth Club - Internet Club Mondays 4-6pm at the Barn.

Brownies: Thursday 6-7.30pm, Holy Family Church Hall
(for 7 to 11 age group)

CAD Drop-In:
Drugs & Alcohol advice, Tues & Fri, 1-3pm, 49 Barns Road
(ox 402919)

Carer and toddler group Until September:
Friday, 1-3pm at the Dovecote. £1

Dads, Lads and Lasses:
Saturdays, 11am at the Barn, 3 pm

Girls Street Dance:
BBL Leisure Centre, 50p.
13yrs-16yrs:
Tuesdays, 4.45 - 5.45pm
8yrs -12yrs:
Wednesdays, 4.45 - 5.45pm

Girls Aerobics:
BBL Leisure Centre. 50p.
Tuesdays, 6 -7pm, 14 -18 years

Dovecote Afterschool Club:
Monday to Thursday, 3.15 - 4.45pm

Dovecote Saturday Club
(for ages 5-12) 10am-1pm.

Dance Classes at the Barn
Tues 4-5pm (5-11years)
5-6pm (12 years +) £3.30
Freestyle, disco, street-dance.

The Edge - Youth Club
BBL Community Centre.
Wed, 1-4.30pm.
Drop in 7.30-9.30pm

Guides, Friday 7-9pm at the Holy Family Church.
Girls, 10-15 years.
Info: 455970.

1st Blackbird Leys Rainbow Guides
for girls aged 5-7 yrs
Fridays, 5.30-6.30pm
Holy Family Church Hall, Cuddesdon Way.
Contact - Laura 0778 7528120

Holy Family Church:
Sunday service 10am, with lively children's church.

Home-Start New Babies Club: Dovecote on Friday, 10.30-12noon

Junior Edge Project:
4.30 - 6pm, Tuesday and Thursday, BBL Community Centre (Supporting black and mixed heritage children)

Leys Community Church
Sunday service 3.30pm at the Leisure Centre.

Leys Youth Football Club:
BBL Leisure Centre on Fridays, 50p.
Boys: School Years 3 to 6: 4pm - 5pm.
School Yrs 7 to 8: 5 - 6pm.
School Yrs 9 to 11: 6 - 7pm.
Girls: (8yrs to 16yrs): 7 - 8pm

Sacred Heart Catholic Church: Mass, every Sunday, 9.30am and 6pm

Self Defence:
6-9pm, Tuesday at the Barn

State Pension Advice Surgery: Leys Linx Centre, 2nd & 4th Monday of the month 9.30am-12.30pm

Swimming - Blackbird Leys Pool
Mondays, 11.30 - 12.30pm:60+ swimming (free).
Tuesdays & Fridays,
12 - 1pm: Water Workout.
Wednesdays, 12 - 1pm: 50+ swimming.
Thursdays 12 -1pm: Ducklings (Parent & toddler classes).
Info: Ox 467042

Weight Watchers:
7-8pm, Thursday at the Barn

Slimming World:
New Testament Church of God, Cowley.
Wednesdays, 7pm. Info: Ox 438114

What do Area Committees do?

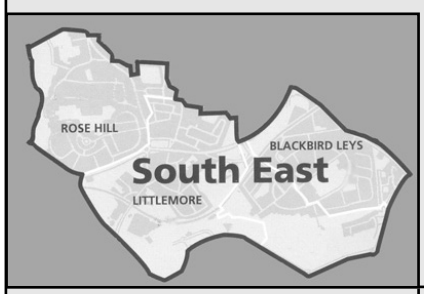
OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

The six Area Committees are responsible for the following:

- abandoned vehicles
- allotments
- car parks
- cemeteries
- community centres
- decisions on planning applications
- ditches and streams
- dog wardens
- parks and countryside management
- public toilets
- street cleaning
- street naming

South East Area Committee meetings

Ring 252249 for further information



Monday 5th September
6.00pm - 9.00pm

Littlemore Village Hall

Monday 10th October
6.00pm - 9.00pm

The Barn Blackbird Leys

Monday 7th November
6.00pm - 9.00pm

Rose Hill Community Centre

Summer with Showtime

Showtime held a successful showcase of young people's talent on 31st July at the Blackbird Leys park. Featuring singers, dancers, rappers and more, the day showed off the young people's ability to try their hand at everything creative. Kevin Brophy from the Social Inclusion Unit who part funded the project said, "It's been a wonderful day full of talented people - it's a huge tribute to everyone involved."

Funded by the Heritage Lottery as part of the Young Roots project in liaison with the Oxford County Council's youth team, the event was organised by young people for young people. Kerissa Lawrence organised the dancers, training and choreography the teams. As part of the six-month preparation for the event, DJs Nico and Baps of Cornerstone sound system gave workshops about the history of reggae music. As a result, the young people researched old time dances and included some ska and reggae flavours in their display.

Dolcie Obhiozele who has been working with the Young Roots project said, "It has been quite stressful but it has gone brilliantly. It's great that so many family and friends have turned out to see their young people perform."

There are a range of events, projects and performances planned throughout the year - contact the African Caribbean Youth Project at the Blackbird Leys Youth Centre for more information on 01865 778250.

Healthy living at Showtime

On the quest to encourage people to eat their recommended five portions of fruit and veg everyday, one of the events the Healthy Living Initiative have attended so far this summer was the Showtime event on 31st July in Pegasus park. They invited people attending to have a go on their free fruit tasting challenge, which involved participants being blindfolded and then asked to taste a selection of fruits including kiwi, apricots, raspberries, melon and blueberries. There was also a display of fruit to show people how much fruit is needed to make up a portion to count towards their 5/day.

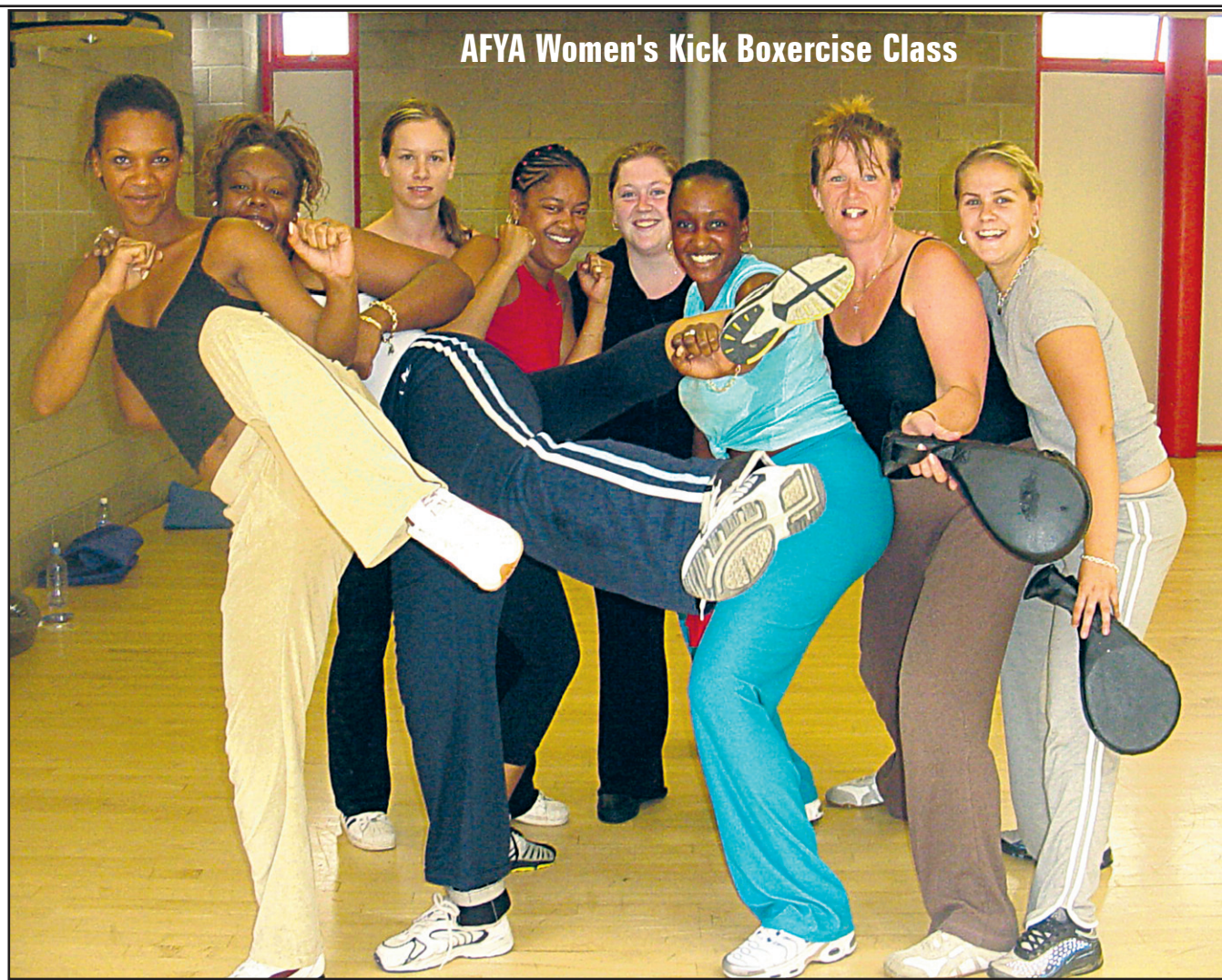
Thanks to Tony Balsamo for the photo of the fair, second down on the left

Fridays 10.00 am to 11.30 pm at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, with a crèche. The class is run by Colleen Mitchell. You get to listen to good music and you get a really good work out.

"This class energises you, it's fun, the moves are wicked and you really do what you gotta do to get a good work out," says Loraine McCleary who goes to the class.

"I love the class," says Gemma Lovatt. "It's the best class because it offers a crèche and all for £1. Colleen is brilliant, there's a good atmosphere and the music is good."

Tanya Prescott



KARATE
KARATE
Keep Fit!
Self Defence!
Self Discipline!
Class For All Standards.
Beginners Always Welcome.
First Week of Training Free!
(The Barn, Nightingale Ave)
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